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AARON'S ROD IN POLITICS.

SIMULTANEOUSLY with the nomination of General Garfield, the Republican party had the good fortune to fall heir to a new idea. Such windfalls are by no means frequent in the political world. As a rule, government is simply an eternal repetend. The problem of yesterday is puzzled over to-day, and comes up for a new solution to-morrow. The life of a nation is, in the main, only an infinite series of attempts to solve the same old problem in some new way. The stock properties of all governments are matters of revenue and administration. Parties are far more frequently divided upon the question of how to do than of what to do. With nations as with individuals, the chief business of existence is to find the means of living. The struggle for daily bread is the great end of government, as well as of the separate existences whose aggregate composes the nation. When to raise money and when to borrow it; what to tax and what to spare; what to buy and what to sell; how to spend and how to save;—these are the questions as to which government is most frequently concerned, and differences of opinion in regard to which usually distinguish parties. They are questions of method and detail. Right or wrong does not enter into them as a component. Policy, expediency, a question of profit and loss, is their highest element.

Now and then there comes a time when the question that is uppermost in all minds is not "How?" but "What?"—when the question of method, the mere economy of administration, sinks into insignificance in the presence of some peril which threatens the very fact of existence, or some crisis when that which has been is cast off like an outgrown garment and that which is to be has not yet assumed form and consistency.

Such an occasion was the birth-hour of the Republican party. Those who led did not know it, but subsequent events fully demonstrated that the people of the North had arrived at that

point when they determined to use their power to cripple and destroy slavery. How, they knew not; neither did they care very much about the means to be employed. Like the Pentecostan multitude, they all heard and saw the same thing—all understood that in some way or other the Republican party in its last analysis meant personal liberty. The public mind turned aside from the beaten paths of administration and addressed itself to the higher duty of deciding between a new-born righteousness and an ancient evil.

So, too, when armed rebellion stood threatening the nation's life, the struggle between parties instantly became not one concerning the economies of existence, but one of existence at all. Again, at the close of the war, questions of method of administration were dwarfed by the overtopping importance of fixing and establishing the terms and conditions of restoration, or, as we blindly though more wisely termed it, reconstruction.

Since those questions have been decided, or at least have taken on the form of legislative enactments, there has been an unremitting attempt to steer our political thought back into the old channels. Politicians and political scolds have agreed in reiterating that we must come back to the good old ways, and fight over again and again the ancient battles of banking, tariff, and currency, currency, banking, and tariff, without any disturbing influences from without. To consider the causes of revolution and counter-revolution, to trace the course of prejudice and caste, to tell the tale of violence, or balance the rights of the citizen over against a petty economy, instead of discussing the rate of interest or the system of banking, is to be "a stirrer up of strife," a "waver of the bloody shirt," a "ranter on dead issues," a party insubordinate, and a pestiferous political nuisance. This is not strange. Politicians do not like to be jostled out of their accustomed ruts. The old issues, the everlasting conundrums, leave the lines of battle undisturbed. They make the conflict of parties as peaceful and regular as a sham battle. The ground is known, the lines are drawn, and the result is—almost immaterial. No one is out of his bearings or beyond his depth. A few dollars, a little hog-cunning, a convenient slander, and the old battle has been won and lost on the same old ground, and by the same perennial parties. A question of principle instead of method is like a bomb-shell in the midst of holiday warfare. It forces an advance over ground that may be full of

pitfalls. A leader, by one misstep, may stumble into oblivion. A new political idea, therefore, is rarely adopted by any party until the last day of grace. Then it is that the people get ahead of their leaders. There is an advance along the whole line of a party which has planned only to hold its old works. Ordered to "dress" on some old issue, the people insubordinately "charge" on some new evil. Such times are crises. Old parties must clothe themselves with new ideas, or new ones are sure to arise.

Such a time is the present. The Democratic party, ever since the close of the war, has been trying to revivify old issues of form and method. They have sought to draw the veil of absolute forgetfulness over the new departure of 1861, and all that was either causative or resultant of that struggle. They have tried to lash the American people back to the lines of the old "autumn maneuvers," to divert attention from the rights of the citizen and the security of the Republic to matters of trade and discount.

Almost by accident, as it would seem, the Republican party gave utterance to a new political thought at Chicago, which is destined, if carried to its logical results, to make the coming quadrenniate of its power no less important and memorable than its first. If neglected, shirked, or trifled with, this administration will simply pass into history as one of those interregnums during which a party held power but did nothing—when "I dare not" waited on "I would," and politicians schemed for future places unmindful of the common weal. This thought which is destined to compel a new departure in politics, is the relation of the general government—the American nation or the American people—to the illiterate voters of the several States.

The Republican platform of 1880, for the first time in our history, pledges a party to the idea of national action in the direction of public education. The resolution in regard to it is not at all striking in its character, except in the fact that it does embrace this idea. It was evidently drawn with fear and trembling, and may be regarded as a not altogether unsuccessful attempt to make language a means of concealing thought rather than expressing it. Its history may almost be traced in its words. It is self-evidently a hesitant yielding to an irresistible demand. It is the language of the skilled politician, compelled to take a forward step in compliance with a popular sentiment which he dare not ignore. Not to go forward is to risk favor;

an inch too far may be ruin to the party whose plan of campaign he is preparing. For years the popular sentiment has been growing. An unshaped, indefinite conviction has sprung up in the public mind that something of the kind is wise and necessary. Members of Congress belonging to this party have introduced tentative measures, designed to feel the public pulse rather than to effect a specific cure. The president of this very convention, with commendable pertinacity, has more than once brought the subject to the attention of his colleagues. The question is one not without difficulty. The national charter is dumb in regard to it. No party has ever gone before to blaze the way, or show its pitfalls and dangers. Four years before, a like committee quietly sat down upon this feeling evidenced by petitions, and sought to be made the basis of a new Southern policy. The President of the Republic, impressed with the need of doing something which had not been done before, during the first three years of his term had not deemed this question worthy of serious consideration, but within a month preceding the sitting of this convention had voiced the popular sentiment in a public address. One of the leading candidates before the convention, a statesman of unusual strength and subtlety, a politician of great sagacity and long experience, had put it forth as one of the first and strongest points of the coming campaign, in a speech of remarkable power, in which, with commendable frankness, he announced his own candidacy for the nomination. It is evident that something must be done. The trend of public thought is unmistakable. The party must say something, but not too much. The draftsman must write as the cautious hunter shot—"so as to hit it if a deer, and miss it if a calf." The demon of State sovereignty rose before him, grim and terrible, stained with the blood of recent warfare, yet potent for defeat.

Thus pressed in front and rear, the politician seized his pen, and, with the skill of polished statecraft, wrote:

"The work of popular education is one left to the care of the several States, but it is the duty of the national government to aid that to the extent of its constitutional ability. The intelligence of the nation is but the aggregate of the intelligence of the several States; and the destiny of the nation must be guided, not by the genius of any one State, but by the genius of all."

It was well and wisely and skillfully done. The first sentence is one of infinite possibilities. Much or little, anything or nothing, may be the scope of its significance according to the

stand-point of the reader. The chameleon cannot rival it in unchangeable power for infinite change. It is a messenger which needs no injunction to be everything to all men. The concluding sentence, the biggest half of the resolution, was addressed with deft flattery directly and entirely to the State sovereignty gnome. The writer judged well that the repeated impersonation of the "several States," and the deft appeal to the banded "genius" of these incorporeal existences, would effectually conceal the kernel of truth hidden in his bushel of chaff. Nevertheless, the grain was there, which is bound to grow and blossom and swallow other issues, like the prophet's rod. If vigorously carried into execution by the party in power, it will change the whole face of the Southern question. If haltingly dealt with as heretofore, that party will justly lose the advantage to be gained by the priority of their declaration in its favor.

THE DANGER.

As a general, abstract principle, it requires no argument to establish the truth of Madison's immortal apothegm that "a popular government, without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce, or a tragedy, or perhaps to both."

It is to be feared, however, that very few have clearly formulated the extent and imminency of the danger arising from popular ignorance, which now confronts us.

There is a general belief that ignorance is at the root of some of our national ills, and that sometime and somehow danger is likely to result therefrom. This peril was clearly apparent to the mind of General Grant, when he recommended the desperate expedient of excluding all illiterates from the right of suffrage, by constitutional amendment. Though it evoked no Congressional action, it awakened thought, and the present state of the public mind is largely due to his action. President Hayes has rarely missed an opportunity during the last few months to feel the public pulse upon this subject, and, like many Republican canvassers during the late campaign, universally met with a hearty response from all, irrespective of party. His last message reveals his own conviction of the danger, but contains no practical suggestions on the subject. Several bills now before Congress are the outgrowth of this general feeling of apprehension.

The usual form of stating the danger to be apprehended from

this source by no means discloses the imminency of our national peril. It does not consist alone in the fact that of our population some seventeen per cent. is illiterate; nor even in the fact that twenty per cent. of our voters cannot read their ballots. This proportion, if evenly distributed, would perhaps hardly afford ground for apprehension, certainly not for immediate alarm. The real danger lies in the unequal distribution of this percentage of illiterates. The following table, compiled from the census of 1870, will sufficiently disclose this fact. While the recent census will considerably increase the aggregates, it is not probable that it will materially affect the relative proportions:

Voting population of the United States.....	7,623,000
“ “ “ former slave States	2,775,000
Illiterate male adults in United States.....	1,580,000
“ “ “ former slave States.....	1,123,000
Per cent. illiterate voters in United States to entire vote...	20
“ “ “ slave States.....	45
“ “ “ States not slave.....	9
“ “ “ South Carolina.....	59
Illiterate voters in Southern States (white).....	304,000
“ “ “ “ (colored)	819,000

From this table the following facts will be apparent:

1. The sixteen Southern States contain about one-third of our voting population, and *almost three-fourths of our illiteracy*.
2. Forty-five per cent. of the voters of the Southern States are unable to read their ballots.
3. The illiteracy of the South, plus six per cent. of its literate voters, can exercise the entire power of those States.
4. If this illiterate vote be neutralized by force or fraud, a majority of the intelligent voters, or twenty-eight per cent. of the entire vote of those States, will exercise their entire national strength.

These States have one hundred and thirty-eight electoral votes, or, in other words, they exercise *seventy-two per cent.* of the power necessary to choose a President or constitute a majority in the House of Representatives, and *eighty-four per cent.* of a majority in the Senate.

By reason of their ignorance, forty-five per cent. of the voters of the South are unable:

1. To know what is their political duty.
2. To be sure that their votes actually represent their wishes.
3. To secure the counting of the ballots which they cast.

4. To protect themselves in the exercise of their ballatorial privileges.

So that the alternative presented is between an honest exercise of power by voters who are too ignorant to have any certain knowledge whether they are right or wrong, and the suppression of their votes by force or fraud. So far as their effects upon the nation are concerned, both are alike dangerous. While this mass of ignorance may be instinctively right in purpose, it is naturally unable to judge of the instrumentalities with which it works. If suppressed, that very act discloses a purpose and intent in itself dangerous. It is simply a choice between the dangers of honest ignorance and dishonest fraud or unlawful violence. The question for the nation to answer is whether it can afford to have three-fourths of the power necessary to control the government exercised by either ignorance, or fraud, or violence. The question is one above partisanship, as the safety of the nation is above party supremacy.

The general apprehension of danger to result from either horn of this dilemma is evidenced by the fact that what is termed the "solid South" is universally regarded as a thing to be either dreaded or excused. In the late campaign, each party accused the other of responsibility for its existence, and each asserted, as one of its chief claims to support, that its success would effectually banish this *bête noir* of our modern politics. Oddly enough, too, the one claimed that the "solid South" would be broken by the election of its candidate, because that action would show an inclination on the part of the North to give to the "solid South" whatever it desired, and thereupon there would result such a struggle over the spoils of victory inside the "solid South" as would permanently destroy all of its solidarity. The argument of the other party was that the success of its candidate would evidence such a determination on the part of the North as would induce the individuals composing the "solid South" to despair of winning national control by means of this solidarity, consequently, it was argued, they would gradually sliver off, court alliance with the Republicans, and, by so doing, not only protect the ignorant colored voters in the exercise of their franchise, but also compel the remainder of their present associates to court in like manner the colored vote, and so accomplish the end, by all professedly deemed most desirable, to wit, the breaking up of the "solid South" and of the colored vote of the South at once.

Both of these claims are fallacious, but they show a universal conviction that the "solid South" and the solid ignorant vote of the South are both dangerous things. The trouble is, that, instead of seeking to eradicate the cause, both parties have hitherto sought to "whip the devil around the stump" by shallow artifices, which, even if they were to succeed, would afford but a temporary relief. This mistake results in a great measure from a misapprehension of the relative character of the present parties at the South, and the use of the terms "the South," "Southern people," and "solid South," in different senses.

Of the white race at the South, some twenty-four per cent. of the voters are illiterate; of the colored race, about ninety per cent. Of the Republican party at the South, about seventy-five per cent. is colored, and the remainder white. The ratio of illiteracy among the whites of the two parties is probably about the same, for, while the white Republicans will hardly average with their Democratic neighbors in wealth, it takes a certain amount of intelligence to furnish the backbone necessary to make a Southern Republican. There are no colored Democrats, or not enough to constitute an appreciable percentage. This estimate would make something more than seventy per cent. of the present Republican party of the South illiterate and twenty-four per cent. of their opponents. This classification of parties dates back to the period of reconstruction, and was formed solely upon the question of accepting or rejecting rehabilitation under those measures. The lodestone which united the opposition was hostility to the political equality of the negro. All other points of difference were insignificant and trivial, except as they bore upon that one absorbing idea. Since that time there has been no material change in the strength or animus of the respective parties.

The party opposed to the reconstruction measures became what is known as the "solid South." The alliance of this faction with the Democratic party of the nation was purely accidental. They united with that party simply because the Republicans favored the reconstruction measures. The "solid South" is not solidly Democratic, but solidly "Southern"; or, what is the same thing, solidly opposed to the exercise of political power by the colored man. It did not become solid in the hope of achieving national power, but moved into the Democratic camp in the hope of achieving power by means of its already

established solidarity. The "solid South" has no especial affinity for the Democracy any more than for any other party. Its distinctive features are peculiar to itself. No defeat of the Democratic party affects its solidarity, nor is any triumph of the Republican party of any moment to it so long as no step is taken to interfere with or remove the causes of its solidarity. This faction was not made "solid" by the hope of enjoying federal patronage and favor. When it was first organized, there seemed little hope of success for it even in local affairs. Only the most far-seeing sagacity could have predicted that astonishing triumph which it has achieved. Yet, there was no hesitation, no faltering, no desertion. The number of proselytes from it during the years of Republican supremacy was surprisingly small. The most tremendous majorities did not appall or discourage them. As they did not abandon their faction when in a minority for the sake of preferment, so they will not now defy its power for the sake of favor.

This faction, unquestionably a minority, assume for themselves the term "Southern," with a sublime disregard of the weak and ignorant majority. This use of the term "Southern" has become so general that its absurdity is almost forgotten. That which is favored by this element is said to be "Southern," and that which is opposed to it, "anti-Southern." A national policy which is thoroughly approved by every member of the actual majority of the people of that section is denounced by this element as one hostile to "the South." Even as these words are written, the message of the President is spoken of by a leading journal as "meeting with universal execration at the South," while in truth no document he has ever written is regarded by the actual majority there as approaching it in good sense and statesmanship. This assumption by a faction of terms denoting the whole, and the general concurrence in their use, is the cause of endless confusion. In this article, "the South" will be used for the section, and the "solid South" to designate the faction.

If such a thing as the disruption of the "solid South," and the distribution of the colored vote between its fragments were possible, it would still be only a temporary remedy for the evil which threatens the nation's future. For a time it would lessen the danger, and the political Micawber might be excused for appealing to an artifice which would give opportunity for an unforeseen something to turn up. When we consider the

extreme improbability of any such disruption, and the absence of any stronger issue than the mere bait of official power which can be offered to induce the dissolution of a "solid South," which is based on race-prejudice and the traditions of the past, we may well conclude that the only remedy is to attack the citadel of ignorance.

There are two methods by which the danger may be avoided. The one is that which has been adopted by certain of the States, which is to exclude the illiterate from the ballot. This can never be honestly done, even if desirable, because in more than one-third of the States an honest majority can never be obtained in its favor. Every unlettered man will of course oppose his own exclusion from political power, unless intimidated or deceived, and there will never be found a time, should it be attempted, when there will not be intelligent voters enough who unite with them to give a majority. Who believes that such a measure could be *honestly* adopted in South Carolina, for instance, where fifty-nine per cent. of the voters are illiterate? Such a movement could not consistently be inaugurated or supported by the Republican party, both because of the vast percentage of illiterates in its Southern wing, and also because it would be a virtual confession of folly or insincerity in its reconstructionary legislation. Such an admission would be fatal.

The only other method of treating this evil is that so cautiously pointed out in the resolution, already quoted, of the Republican platform of 1880—national education, or national aid to education. So that we face the inquiry, Is this a sufficient and possible remedy?

THE POWER OF CONGRESS.

THE first question to be considered in connection with this inquiry is the power of Congress over the subject-matter.

No power to provide for the education of the citizens of the different States, or that vague thing denominated "American citizenship," or to prescribe the course or character of instruction, is provided in the Constitution. At the time of its adoption, such a thing as an organized system of public schools under State control was unknown. The whole idea of public education is one of later growth. Washington and others of his compatriots were anxious for a national university, but the systematic educa-

tion of all the people, by the state or nation, was hardly dreamed of at that time. Its especial necessity, arising from the influence of ignorance upon political affairs, was not then felt, because of two things, viz.: the restrictions upon the ballot were such that very few men could compass that privilege who were not at least able to read and write. The immigration to our shores (except the pauper and penal immigration to some of the Southern plantations) had chiefly been confined to religious malcontents, who came to avoid persecution, and persons who voluntarily left their homes to seek advantage from settlement in unbroken wilds. This very fact stamps them as among the most enterprising, far-seeing, and determined of their respective classes. They were really picked men. The doctrine of the survival of the fittest never had a better illustration than in the settlement of the American colonies. This was the main reason why our early settlers, coming as they did chiefly from the middle and lower classes of England, developed so suddenly a capacity for self-government, invented new governmental forms, and adapted themselves to untried conditions with such astonishing ease. They neither understood the danger resulting from ignorance, however, nor the proportions to which it would grow in our land. They were too busy securing rights against the power of king and lords to fear any evil to come from the masses. It was one of those things which the Constitution is silent in regard to, simply because its authors had no prevision of the subject-matter. It is, however, one of that numerous class of questions which the inherent necessities of national existence have, from time to time, forced upon our attention. The department of agriculture, the coast survey, scientific and exploring expeditions, the signal service, the military and naval academies at West Point and Annapolis, and many other branches of administrative work, are beyond the purview of the written Constitution. There is no sense in saying that they are not within a strict construction of that instrument. They cannot be embraced by *any* construction of its words, because they were not within the range of its authors' thoughts, and could not have been within the intendment of their language. Of these extensions of the governmental powers beyond the purview of the written Constitution, by far the greater portion have been accepted and concurred in without controversy. Their need was so apparent, and the logic of their existence so irresist-

ible, that they have been deemed only necessary corollaries of other unquestioned powers.

The incidents of national power—those things which are essential to its existence, development, and perpetuity—have always been held to be within the legitimate scope of both the legislative and executive branches of our national government. Out of our Constitution has grown a nation, and out of the needs of that nation, following the English precedent, has grown the doctrine of intendment, by which our Constitution is kept as flexible, as capacious and receptive as the unwritten constitution of Great Britain. The positive authorizations and inhibitions of the written instrument are, of course, in no case to be disregarded; but the silences which lie between have been peopled with incidental powers until the fabric of a compact and harmonious nationality bids fair to rise by natural and healthy growth out of the imperfect federation which our fathers adopted.

The power to provide for the education of the people, to secure the intelligence of its electors and thereby prevent its own disintegration and destruction, is one of these incidents of national existence. The right of self-preservation and defense is as much an essential of national as of individual life. The power to provide for an intelligent exercise of the ballatorial power is a necessary incident of elective government. If we are to be ruled by the ballot, the ballot-box must be kept open, free, and the power to be exercised through it must be the power of intelligence. The rule of the ballot implies supervision; and the power to make all participants in our governmental control, implies the right to make them fit to do so. Manhood suffrage, equality of right, presupposes, in the power conferring such equality, the power and the right to render the recipient capable of its intelligent exercise. The safety of the republic is the highest law, and the most evident condition of its safety is, that those who rule shall have sufficient intelligence to know what they desire to do, and when they are doing it. The illiterate man who holds a ballot is like the blind man who wields a sword—he knows not whether he wounds friend or foe.

The ballot-box, controlled by ignorance, is as much an instrument of chance as a dice-box. The illiterate has, in the first place, but a limited means of learning how he ought to vote, and no means at all of making sure that he has voted as he wishes. He is the ready victim of fraud. He invites deception, and

furnishes food to the demagogue. He is more to be feared than the traitor or usurper, because he constitutes the following which makes treason dangerous. The ignorant voter swells the rank and file of the army that follows at the heels of the corrupt politician. Education does not make men honest, but it enables them to detect fraud. It is a safeguard, because the bulk of mankind are honest, and if intelligent enough to distinguish the right, will follow it. The power to educate its own voters then, is, and must be, inherent in any republic, because it is only an incident of the right of national defense.

The nation's right of self-defense, the implied power to maintain itself, was not exhausted by the struggle to put down rebellion. It equally exists as to any impending evil. The national board of health, and the proposed action in regard to the cattle plague, are recent instances in which the public mind has approved the exercise of such power. Is the nation to hold its hand, permit disease to ravage a portion of the land and threaten all the rest, simply because the boundary of a State must be crossed to provide a remedy? The peril from ignorance is of precisely the same character. Fortunately it is not, as a fact, contagious, but under our system of government its evils are by no means bounded by the State, or district, in which it prevails. When it furnishes the votes which elect a member of Congress from the city of New York, or by fraud or intimidation permits a member to be chosen by the majority of a minority in Mississippi, the conduct of those representatives bears with equal weight, for good or ill, on every citizen in every district of the United States. If the blind man cut only himself he might perhaps be allowed to play with the sword; but when fifty millions more are wounded every time he smites himself, it is not only permissible for them to take measures for their own protection, but incumbent upon them to do so. It is because aggregated ignorance has become dangerous to the continuance and development of the nation, inimical to our form of government and the principles on which it is based, that the nation has the right to begin and carry on a war of extermination against it. It is not the Constitution, but the law of national existence that flows from the Constitution, which gives us this right. A nation has not only the inherent right to exist, to guard and protect its present, but also to secure its future and perpetuate its life. That right our nation is not only entitled to exercise, but it has reached a

point where further to omit to do so would be hazardous and criminal.

While, if it became necessary, the nation might lawfully stamp out ignorance as it did secession, yet it becomes incumbent on the statesman to adopt that method which promises to secure the result aimed at with the least interference with the established harmony of our complex system of government. There are three *possible* methods of national education:

1. The assumption by the general government of the duty of educating its own citizens, without reference to the State organizations.

2. The distribution of a national fund to the various State organizations, to be by them applied and controlled, without supervision or interference on the part of the general government.

3. The appropriation of a fund in aid of primary schools in the different States, to be administered under the supervision and control of the national government.

The first of these needs no consideration, because, as has just been remarked, it is only to be resorted to when all other plans have failed. Neither public sentiment nor the imminency of the peril is such as to justify such a radical departure from the system of coördination which has existed hitherto between our State and national governments.

The second, that of placing funds absolutely in the hands of the various States for educational purposes, which is the basis idea of the bills now pending before Congress, is open to the following serious objections:

1. The experience of the nation in regard to such bequests is not encouraging. The results have not generally been at all proportionate to the munificence of the gifts.

2. Such a fund is especially liable to misappropriation. It goes into the absolute control of the various State legislatures, and being a fund not raised by immediate taxation of their own constituents, they are naturally held to a less rigid accountability for its expenditure. "Easy come, easy go" is especially true of such funds. It is almost a moral certainty that its investment or application would soon become a party question in every State, and the result would be a minimum of progress at a maximum of cost.

3. Such a fund is liable to be diverted from its legitimate

purpose for the benefit of a class or a sect. Instead of being devoted to the cure of illiteracy, it may be frittered away in costly scientific experiment, or the support of higher education for a few, which, while good enough in itself, does not materially affect the specific evil sought to be remedied. The bill now pending before Congress has not avoided this evil. One-third of the fund it appropriates is to go to the support of colleges. Illiteracy is the present danger. When that is cured, there will be time enough to think about polishing diamonds. The Louisville "Journal" is entirely right when it says, "Let the whole proceeds go to the common schools, and to no schools of higher education." The nation is interested in curing the illiteracy of all classes and both races. A fund given in bulk to the authorities of a State can no longer be controlled by the general government, and may be applied to the benefit of one race or class, without remedy. The fund distributed to the States many years ago was, in not a few cases, invested in Confederate bonds and used to destroy the giver.

4. Instead of being an incentive to exertion on the part of the States and their citizens, it is a bid for carelessness and sloth. Instead of exerting themselves to supplement the nation's bounty with their own best endeavors, the tax-payers of the State would be apt to clamor for a reduction of the State tax for schools on account of this donation, and demagogues would soon seek for votes by promising such relief, thus corrupting their constituents by means of the national funds, and destroying that public sentiment which must underlie every successful system of public instruction.

THE REMEDY.

WE come, then, to consider the third method, and meet at once the inquiry: "Can the general government administer a fund in aid of public education in the various States without assuming the control of the public schools thereof?"

We believe it can, by means of any system which shall contain the following elements:

1. The raising of a sufficient national fund for educational purposes.

2. The distribution of this fund on the basis of illiteracy.

3. The payment of the fund directly to the officers or teachers of schools in towns or districts, according to the number of

illiterates therein, and on proof that schools, free to all within school age, have actually been kept in operation therein for a certain specified portion of the year.

4. A thorough system of inspection and supervision of the schools thus assisted, and full and accurate reports of all matters necessary to direct future legislation on the subject.

5. Provision that the fund not applied in any particular district for any year shall be forfeited to the general fund for the succeeding year.

6. The sum allowed ought, in no case, to be more than one-third or one-half the amount necessary to maintain the school during the specified time; the balance being required to be provided either by State taxation or private subscription.

It is not intended here to discuss the method of raising this fund, nor the amount required, further than to express the belief that it should be a regular part of the national budget, and be provided in like manner with other current expenses. We should not wait for the slow process of a sinking-fund, nor seek to sneak out of responsibility by giving the income of a fancifully invested sum, the existence of which may depend on some doubtful contingency. It should be an honest fund, not raised by indirection nor appropriated by stealth. Its distribution, on the basis of illiteracy, is an idea already incorporated in at least two bills now before Congress, and strongly advocated by Mr. Commissioner Eaton for several years. It has the merit of putting the plaster directly on the sore.

The result of this would be to apply more than two-thirds of the fund to primary education at the South, so long as the present ratio of illiteracy existed there. This is not only good policy, but the highest justice. Slavery was the parent of ignorance, not only on the part of the slave, but also of the white race. Through national encouragement it grew, and the amount invested in it yearly increased until the war began. The result of the war not only deprived the South of the proceeds of previous economy by destroying the capital thus invested, but also, by making the freedman a citizen, imposed on some one the task and burden of his instruction. It is an enormous undertaking for either the State or the nation. For those States, it is quite an impossible one. They could, by the utmost reasonable exertion, hardly bring their population to the level of our present Northern intelligence in a hundred years. During that time, the nation

would be constantly imperiled by this mass of ignorance. Not only is it an almost impossible task for them, but it is one which they ought not in justice to be asked to perform alone. Not only did the nation, by its laws and institutions, encourage slavery, but it shared in its profits and reaped advantage from the prosperity which it helped to bring. The merchants of the North shared the profits of every pound of cotton, tobacco, or sugar which the Southern planter raised. The Northern manufacturer had the advantage of this great market close at hand, and protected from foreign competition by a tariff which made every planter of the South pay tribute to him on almost every article he purchased. The advantages of slavery were, therefore, shared by North and South alike, and in a pretty nearly equal degree. The evils of slavery, and the losses consequent upon emancipation, fell mainly upon the South. It is true that great losses were sustained by the North. The industries of the North so greatly exceed those of the South, and its aggregated wealth is so much more, that the burden of public debt falls chiefly upon it. Yet it is by no means just that the South should be compelled to bear alone the burden of curing the evils which the nation fostered and grew fat upon. If slavery was an evil, the nation should bear a part of the cost of its cure. If it be regarded only as a productive institution, the North should bear a part of the cost of its transformation into self-directing labor, and a co-equal political element, because it shared in the profits of its enslavement. There is still another view of this matter. Although emancipation was a necessary resultant of the war of rebellion, and enfranchisement an unavoidable corollary of emancipation, yet, as political facts, both were of Northern origin, and enforced by Northern or national power. The voice of the South—excluding the colored man's vote—has never ratified either the emancipation of the slave or the enfranchisement of the freedman. By national authority they were made constituent elements, not only of the nation itself, but of the subordinate commonwealths in which they dwelt. The reconstruction acts were in effect as compulsory as if they had been prescribed by the commander-in-chief, with force of arms. The fact that we empowered the colored man to do by his ballot the will of the nation, does not deprive those acts of their compulsory character, so far as the former constituent elements of statal-power in the Southern States were concerned. Their

result was to render necessary the education of the illiterate voters of the South, in order to prevent misgovernment or usurpation. Sooner or later, every man in those States will see that their only hope lies in the intelligence of their voters. Thus to compel those States to assume a vast expenditure is a flagrant instance of taxation without representation. It is what the Irishman, during the war, defined a draft to be,—“a nate way of compelling a poor fellow to volunteer.” Equity and good conscience, as well as the public safety, demand that the nation should assume a fair share of this burden.

The third proposition is intended to afford a simple and effective method of securing the application of the fund to the very purpose for which it was intended. It is the most important element of the plan proposed. Instead of giving the fund in gross into the hands of the States and making them its almoner, the nation itself takes care that its purpose is fulfilled. It secures its bounty to the people, and not to the States. It is, in effect, the plan adopted in the distribution of the Peabody fund, and has there shown itself well calculated both to secure immunity from imposition and also to awaken public interest and coöperation in educational work. By this wise method of administration, the trustees have doubled, and perhaps trebled, the value of Peabody's munificent benefaction. Giving to no school enough to wholly sustain it; requiring it to be kept open a certain number of months in every school year; to have a certain minimum of enrolled pupils and a certain average attendance during that time, and, above all, paying only when its work has been done, the Peabody fund has done more good by inducing others to give, than by the funds actually distributed. Its working has been altogether harmonious, both with State systems and free schools maintained by private subscription. The same system adopted by the nation would have a like effect. If the authorities of a State should refuse to coöperate with the nation, the people of the separate districts of such State might still share its benefits by a little individual exertion. It would only be necessary, in order to carry out this provision, to ascertain the number of illiterates in any specified territory of each race, apportion the fund thereto, and before giving money to any school within that town or district, to require proof either that it was open to all races, or, in States where public opinion does not allow of mixed schools, that like opportunity was afforded to the other race by other schools in such district.

Of course, the details of this would require careful elaboration. No man could to-day draw a bill sufficiently broad and elastic to meet all the needs of such a system. Only care, experience, and the most extended study of the data furnished by full and careful reports could enable one to accomplish such a task.

From this very fact arises the necessity of the fourth proposition. Up to this point it is believed that the plan proposed has steered clear of debatable ground. It cannot well be denied that the Congress has a right to appropriate funds for school purposes, since it has not unfrequently done so. It will hardly be questioned that it may distribute that fund itself, and not through the agency of the State governments, provided the plan adopted is not intended to favor one State more than another. In connection with this, it should be remembered that the purpose and object of this work is neither to benefit nor favor any State nor section. Its object is not even to favor the recipients of its bounty. Its sole intent is to protect the nation from an insidious and deadly peril. In this result every State, and every individual in every State, has an equal and direct interest. As it is intended, however, to act in harmony with State systems of public instruction, to assist, promote, and develop primary schools, which are, in part or in whole, supported by taxation under State laws, controlled by State officials, and managed by State authority, it may be urged at once that the States will not submit to national supervision or inspection of such schools. It will be noted that it is not proposed that the government shall exercise any *control* over such schools, but only to provide that, as a condition precedent to participation in the benefits of the fund, the school shall have been open to the thorough inspection and supervision of an authorized representative of the general government, who shall report upon its methods, grade, and character. It is not proposed that he shall have any authority, but merely be the eyes through which the Congress shall watch over its own work, and guide itself in the future exercise of its power. These inspectors are to be merely gatherers of data, acting under prescribed forms. Nothing need be said about their method of appointment or compensation. It is not intended that there should be a numerous force of paid inspectors. On the contrary, it is believed that good men and women can be found in every township in the land who will willingly give the little time required to visit the schools

in their district, and furnish the reports required, for the sake of securing the benefits of the system and promoting the cause of education. They should be appointed without regard to party or sex. Indeed, it is more than probable that there would be no occasion for partisan feeling in regard to the matter. Each race should be allowed at least a representation in the supervision of its own schools, if desired.

It is not believed that any serious opposition could be made to such a system of inspection. If it is, the issue ought to be made up at once. In no State could a party standing on such opposition long succeed in retaining power. It is in the Southern States alone that any opposition to such a plan of national action is to be anticipated. The mistaken ideas of the rank and file of the "solid South," in regard to the true interests of that section, naturally incline them to oppose anything looking toward governmental action in this respect, and many of their leaders would be bitterly hostile to anything which promised to secure the enlightenment of their constituents. Their power depends in great measure on the ignorance of the masses. It is a mistake to suppose that the leaders of the "solid South" are the best men of the organization which they control. They are, to a large extent, the buccaneers, the desperadoes, of their own party; the men who were bold enough and unscrupulous enough to assume its leadership in the days of active kukluxism, and head the revolutionary organizations which gave it power. They are men who gained prominence by their boldness in directing movements which touched the verge of treason, were unlawful and violent. There were many who sympathized with the purposes of such organizations who did not approve of their methods. Few cared to face danger and ostracism to oppose; but many tacitly disapproved. These are the really "best men" of the "solid South." As a rule, they are not extravagantly proud of their present leaders. Many of them—and the number is hourly increasing—are becoming more and more convinced that the education of the voter is the only chance for the permanent prosperity of their section. These would undoubtedly give in their adhesion to such a system.

The principle of national supervision, however, is vital to the success of national aid to education, because:

1. It provides a check upon fraud, imposition, or misapplication of the fund.
2. It secures material for future amendment of the law.

3. It enables the Congress to know just what sort of instruction the citizens of the nation are receiving through its bounty.

This last point is not one to be neglected. It is a very significant fact, that in nearly every one of the Southern States the text-books prescribed by the authorities openly and ably defend the right of secession; extol the Confederacy and its leaders; assail the national government and its defenders, and, in short, tend directly to diminish the respect due to the government, and justify the action of those who sought its disruption. No man can read the Southern school histories without being assured that their purpose and intent is to instill the extremest doctrines of State sovereignty and secession, both by direct argument, and by subtle depreciation of the federal government and its acts and agencies. This is altogether natural. The "solid South" is, in the main, the successor of the rebellious South, not in its present purpose, but in its underlying spirit, and largely in its *personale*. To defend rebellion is to them merely the instinct of self-justification. To uphold and justify the leaders of secession without assailing the government which suppressed rebellion is a logical impossibility. If Jeff Davis is to be glorified as a patriot and a martyr, Lincoln must, of necessity, be depreciated. If the rebellion was just and righteous, of course its suppression was a crime. That those who promoted and carried on rebellion should desire to stand in history as patriots and martyrs is altogether natural and reasonable. That they should especially desire their sons and their daughters, to the latest moment of time, to venerate their cause and glorify their efforts is by no means surprising. That their children should be even more devout believers in the righteousness of the "lost cause" than their fathers ever were is but a natural result. Hardly a man of the South has ever admitted that secession or rebellion was wrong. "It was simply a question of power," said one prominent Southerner. "The principles for which Lee fought and Jackson fell" are referred to by another as living facts. "The sword decides nothing" has become a favorite apothegm with them. Not one has expressed penitence, or any conviction of having adhered to an unholy cause, or even admitted that if they were placed in like circumstances again they would do otherwise. Their words to the coming generation are not: "My son, take warning from the errors of thy father; shun that false doctrine which led me to shed blood in an unworthy cause; beware of any pitfall of

prejudice or dogma that may lead you to take up arms against the government of the United States." On the contrary, their language is: "Our cause was just; we were entirely right; our deeds of heroism were unmatched; our escutcheon was unstained; our enemies were servile and degraded, corrupt and inhuman; we were never defeated, but were simply 'overpowered' by a hireling and imported soldiery; we were *right* enough but not *strong* enough!"

Considering these things, it is not surprising that the books which are prescribed, even for the colored schools of the South, by the State officials, are largely occupied in demonstrating to the children of emancipated parents the righteousness of that confederacy whose corner-stone was slavery, and the unholiness of that government which oppressed, exasperated, and finally "overpowered" the "South." As a matter of sentiment, we cannot refrain from a certain sympathy with this feeling. When we consider it as a political fact, however, we must lay aside sentiment, and inquire of ourselves whether it promises well for the future of the country that one-third of its children are being taught to despise and condemn that government to whose crowning effort the nation owes its existence.

No one desires in any manner to reflect upon the individual motives of the Confederate leaders or soldiery. A man may be honestly and earnestly and patriotically wrong. We are willing to admit that the adherents of the Confederacy were so. Indeed, we have always clamorously insisted that such was the fact, and have thrust our forgiveness upon them unsought, by reason of it. Such, however, has never been their position. They have always stoutly insisted, not only that they were *sincere*, but that they were *right*. If this be true, then the nation was wrong, and if wrong then is wrong to-day, and always will be wrong until the principles of the Confederacy prevail, and the wrong of its suppression is righted. This is the unavoidable conclusion from the doctrine taught in the public schools of the South to-day.

It becomes necessary, therefore, to know the extent and effect of such teaching. It is believed that general intelligence in this age of free thought, fed with the utterances of an untrammelled press, is in itself a sure cure for false dogma, and the writer confidently expects that such a system of national education will soon modify, and eventually do away both with such instruction and the baser element of the feeling from which it springs. It is,

however, a matter which should not go unnoted, and the government should be fully informed to what extent a system designed to secure its perpetuity is perverted to increase its peril. By no means should funds be given into the hands of State authorities to be used in strengthening such a sentiment.

The fifth of the proposed elements of this system is merely designed to prevent any district from allowing its proportion of the fund to accumulate, until it is sufficient to maintain a school for the prescribed period in one year, and then drawing and using it, without any exertion on the part of its own people to supplement and enhance its benefits; and the sixth is intended to make the law a constant incentive to local efforts to promote general primary education.

The probable results of such a system are almost too vast for estimate. Some of them, however, are hardly matters of conjecture. Among these are:

1. It would rapidly reduce the number of men who do not know where to register, where to vote, for whom they are voting, what are their rights, or what is necessary to be done to secure them.

2. It would rapidly increase the number of men who would know how they were voting, be able to see to it that their votes were counted, and whose knowledge would enable them intelligently to determine their duty.

3. It would strike at the roots of the "exodus" by enabling the laborer to guard himself from fraud by the terms of his contract, and by securing its honest and intelligent enforcement.

4. It would offer a new issue which would enable men who are not proud of fraud, and are ashamed of violence, to withhold their support from the "solid South," at least upon national questions.

5. It would afford opportunity for re-organizing the Republican party of the South, and do away with "rings" designed simply to gather crumbs of patronage, and not inclined to court accessions of such talent and character as might interfere with the distribution of the crumbs. While it is, in no true sense, what the pending "Burnside Bill" has been termed—"a gift from the more educated to the illiterate States," but a measure of self-protection and justice merely, it is still far preferable, as a measure of wise conciliation, to that extensive scheme of internal improvement at the South, which consists chiefly in finding channels for the waters of the West, and water for the channels of the East.

6. It strikes at the very root of the sentiment in which the doctrine of State rights is grounded. The Southern man has heretofore regarded the nation as a vague penumbra, foreign, and usually hostile to the State, which is the object of his most profound adoration. His universal excuse for rebellion is: "I would go with my State against anything outside of it." This plan of State aid to education presents the national government to the eyes of all the people, constantly and persistently, and in an entirely beneficent light. They will learn to regard it, not as a thing "outside" of the State, but *inside* of, above, and around, pervading, sustaining, and vivifying the State.

7. By raising the grade of intelligence among the working population of the South, it will tend to promote the growth of manufactures, and so unify the interests and development of the different parts of the nation.

Other effects of perhaps even greater significance will occur to the mind which carefully considers the possibilities of such a system. There remains only to discuss the cost. In regard to this it need but be said that no money can compensate for the perils which every quadrenniate brings, by reason of the cloud of ignorance which hangs over the Southern portion of the republic.

So far as the foregoing pages are occupied with matters of method, they are of course only tentative: other and better plans may be devised, or these greatly improved; but so far as they pertain to the developments of the present and the past, to the nature of the remedy rather than the details, they are the result of long and careful study, thoughtful and unprejudiced observation, and the most profound conviction.

To any one who may be disposed to count the cost, there comes an imperative demand to estimate also the danger, to consider whether the present evil shows any hopeful signs of amendment; whether by any other means the republic is likely to be preserved; whether the results, even aside from all political considerations, will not fully repay the expenditure; whether justice does not especially demand that the nation should educate the freedman it has emancipated; and finally, whether the noble sentiment of Peabody, that "education is a debt which the present owes to future generations," does not include within its scope the nation, as well as its components, the State and the individual.

ALBION W. TOURGEE.